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## NOTES AND NEWS

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### NEED OF DIFFERENT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL COURSES

That the elementary school may in reality afford equality of educational opportunity, that it may take into account the differences in the social body and the differences in children, it is necessary that a distinction be made between the work of giving children the rudiments of an education and preparing them for a higher academic institution, and the work of giving children the fundamentals of an education and fitting them for early entrance upon life-pursuit, and there is need that separate courses of instruction be provided for the accomplishment of these different purposes.

There are at least three ways of doing this dual work of the elementary school. First an option may be offered in all grades between two courses, one designed for children who purpose to continue their schooling, the other adapted to the interests and needs of children who from choice or necessity expect to complete their education with the grades. A second means is to provide one course of study in the first four grades for all children, and to offer an option in the four grammar grades between two courses, the one designed for those going on, and the other for those expecting to attend no other school. A third means, supplementary to the second, is to organize elementary industrial schools as separate centers of instruction and provide a course of study half of which is devoted to the more practical portions of the fundamental academic branches and the other half to industrial studies and activities.

The second of these suggestions is to be tried in Cleveland this year. Two courses are to be prepared for the four grammar grades—the one adapted to the needs of children of literary taste and going on to the high school, the other to the needs of children looking to early entrance upon life-pursuit. This second course is to be rendered flexible so as to meet the needs of different districts and groups of children through permitting of a maximum and minimum of time that may be given to the several studies, and may be installed at the option of the principal with the consent of the superintendent, but the selection of this course to be optional with the parent.

The third suggestion is to be embodied in an elementary industrial school for boys and girls who are more than thirteen years of age and not below the sixth grade. The course will be two years in length, consisting of two types of work, academic and industrial, and the time of the school will be equally divided between the two. This school will interest boys and girls to whom the regular course is unduly literary and who are not interested in bookish things, and it will also interest those whose economic condition requires them to leave school early to become wage-earners.

The academic studies comprise: English, arithmetic, and geography-history. The English will consist of spelling, writing, reading, literature, and composition. The arithmetic will include accounts and shop problems. The geography-history will deal with the industrial, commercial, and political phases of our national development as well as municipal studies.

On the industrial side the course will include, for boys, benchwork in wood and sheet metal, freehand drawing and design, and mechanical drawing; for girls, sewing and garment-making, cooking and household arts, freehand drawing, design, and construction. Throughout the work will be made intensely practical and be given a direct industrial and commercial turn.

These optional courses designed to meet the needs of children who will probably attend no other schools should, however, by no means lead educationally into a blind alley. They should give such place to the essentials of the three R's and so emphasize neatness, thoroughness, and accuracy in industrial and commercial work, that the child completing such a course would be admitted to manual training or technical high schools and be able, by doing a certain amount of literary work in addition, to gain entrance to an academic high school.

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*School Gardening and Nature Study in English Rural Schools and in London* is the title of Bulletin No. 204 of the Office of Experiment Stations, of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. The Bulletin is written by Miss Susan B. Sipe who has previously rendered similar valuable assistance in the publication of other articles upon school gardening. This bulletin deals with nature-study in the schools of Whitechapel, London, at the Kentish Town Road School, London, with rural school gardens, and with teacher's courses and examinations.

This entire description of what is being done in English schools in natural-history work is filled with the idea of dynamic as compared with what may be called static natural history. Live plants and animals, outdoor studies in great number, the growth of plants in school gardens, the growth of animals in the school garden and about the home are matters of constant mention. The fact that growing plants and animals have large educative results with children seems to be a central factor in the work in English schools, if Miss Sipe's description is representative of conditions in general. The bulletin will be found valuable for all who are interested in supervising or teaching the different aspects of natural history.

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